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## Japan

### Agricultural Situation

#### This Week in Japan

2001

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**ASMI Sells to a Full House in Shiogama; Record Year for Imports of U.S. Red Meat; Top Frozen Food Importer Sells Certified Organic Food; Japan's Health Food Market Shows Strong Growth; Short Lettuce Supply Creates Opportunities for U.S. Exporters.**

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
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*An Update of Major News and Events from the Largest U.S. Agricultural Export Market*  
Volume V, Issue No. 5

## ***This Week in Japan***

February 5, 2001

- i ASMI Sells to a Full House in Shiogama:** Over 150 importers, processors, and buyers of U.S. seafood last weekend attended a standing room only seminar on Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute efforts in Japan. Agricultural Affairs Office' Kevin Latner opened the seminar. The seminar was part of a week long seafood promotion program including store promotions, a weekend long seafood fair and trade promotion with the industry. The program began in Sendai, with an in-store promotion showcasing Alaskan salmon and opened by ATO's David Miller. The "Alaska Seafood Rendezvous in Shiogama" food fair highlighted Alaskan salmon, shrimp and crab and drew record crowds. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
  
- i Record Year for Imports of U.S. Red Meat:** Japan's imports of U.S. red meat in 2000, volume-wise, are forecast to set record highs with U.S. beef at 345,000 MT and U.S. pork at 189,000 MT. A strong yen and solid retail and HRI demand for U.S. meat is attributable to the growth in 2000. U.S. import share is a leading 48% for beef and second in pork to only Denmark at 29%. The prospects of import growth for meat in 2001 will likely be limited by a weaker yen against the dollar and euro coupled with high meat inventories. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
  
- i Top Frozen Food Importer Sells Certified Organic Food:** Japan's largest frozen food handler, Nichirei, announced that they will start selling Chinese organic frozen vegetables, certified according to the revised JAS Law in March 2001. They have obtained certificates of American and New Zealand organic frozen vegetables and will begin selling those products in March as well. ATO Osaka has been encouraging organic food importer contacts to communicate effectively and work closely with their U.S. certifier and organic food supplier contacts in order not to have their organic trade business disrupted by the new import law. (ATO Osaka)
  
- i Japan's Health Food Market Shows Strong Growth:** Japan's rapidly expanding health food market, currently an estimated \$10 billion, according to the *Japan Economic Newspaper*. Food companies, including *House Foods* and *Ajinomoto*, have recently introduced a host of new stress-reducing, reduced-calorie, and vitamin-fortified health food products and beverages to cash in on the trend. Health food sales have spread beyond specialty health stores to mainstream supermarkets and convenience stores, such as *7-11 Japan*, which opened a "health food corner" inside its stores last fall. (ATO Tokyo)
  
- i Short Lettuce Supply Creates Opportunities for U.S. Exporters:** Poor growing conditions in Japan for leafy vegetables this winter have reduced supplies, boosting prices and making imports more attractive. Wholesale prices in recent weeks have ranged from 4,500 yen (\$38.50) to 5,500 yen (\$47.00) per 10 kg case, more than double the level last year. The tight supply situation is expected to continue through February. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

**Upcoming events:** Feb 6: Future Farmers of America; Feb 9: USAPEEC; Feb 18-20: USWA Board Team 2001 to Asia; Feb 20: Iowa Pork Producers Association; Feb 21-Mar 1: Ross Kreamer, Area Officer, FAS/USDA; Mar 2-13: Architecture & Construction Trade Show; Mar 4-7: Compliance Review of USAPEEC; Mar 8: GMO Seminar